

September 4, 2008

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing, respectfully, to request your signature on Assembly Bill 2765, a bill designed to reform the process used when the State considers aerial spraying of pesticides in urban areas. AB 2765 was introduced in response to the controversy surrounding recent spraying in the Monterey/Santa Cruz area and proposed spraying this year in the Bay Area, including in my district.

My constituents and I are elated that the proposed spraying program in the Bay Area and the Monterey Bay Area has been put on hold in favor of the introduction of sterile Light Brown Apple Moths in infested urban areas. However, AB 2765 is still necessary to ensure that the missteps in this eradication campaign do not recur when aerial spraying is proposed in urban areas in the future.

As you know, there was extraordinary public discontent with the Department of Food and Agriculture during the Monterey/Santa Cruz spraying and the run-up to the Bay Area spray program. AB 2765 is an attempt to reform the process used when such spraying is proposed.

AB 2765 will include disclosure and public involvement in the process. The bill requires the Department to hold public hearings before spraying and to disclose elements of the spray to the public [to the extent authorized by law]. It also requires a prior evaluation of the human and environmental health effects of proposed aerial spray.

This bill will re-connect people and their government in decisions that may affect public health. The public has a right to know what eradication steps are proposed, and what ingredients are in the spray, before spraying, not as an after-thought. We must include affected communities in a public process.

I have worked diligently to address the farm community's concerns about this bill throughout the legislative process. AB 2765 strikes the proper balance, providing public input and disclosure of the pesticide's ingredients and, at the same time, enabling a rapid response to a pest's invasion and protecting the privacy of proprietary information. That's why the Agriculture Council is now in support.

There is wide-ranging support for this bill – including a wide consortium of environmental and health groups including Pesticide Watch, Sierra Club, and Marin Organic, as well as California Women for Agriculture. AB 2765 enjoyed bipartisan support.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully request your signature on AB 2765 to ensure openness and disclosure when aerial spraying of pesticides is proposed in urban areas.

Sincerely,

JARED HUFFMAN
Assemblymember, 6th District